**CARS Checklist for Research Source Selection**

Credibility

* Trustworthy source
* Author’s credentials
* Evidence of quality control
* Known or respected authority
* Organizational support

Goal: an authoritative source; a source that supplies some good evidence that it should be trusted

Accuracy

* Up-to-date
* Factual
* Detailed
* Exact
* Comprehensive
* Audience and purpose reflect intentions of completeness and accuracy

Goal: a source that is correct today (not yesterday); a source that gives the whole truth

Reasonableness

* Fair
* Balanced
* Objective
* Reasoned
* No conflict of interest
* Absence of fallacies or slanted tone

Goal: a source that engages the subject thoughtfully and reasonably; it is concerned with the truth

Support

* Listed sources
* Contact information
* Available corroboration
* Claims supported
* Documentation supplied

Goal: a source that provides convincing evidence for the claims made; a source you can triangulate (find at least two other sources that support it).

**If your research source cannot pass the CARS test, don’t use it! It could be totally made up!**

**Living with Information: The CAFÉ Advice**

Here is one last piece of advice to help you live well in the world of information: Take your information to the Café (Challenge, Adapt, File, Evaluate).

Challenge: Challenge information and demand accountability. Stand right up to the information and ask questions. Who says so? Why do they say so? Why was this information created? Why should I believe it? Why should I trust this source? How is it known to be true? Is it the whole truth? Is the argument reasonable? Who supports it?

Adapt: Adapt your skepticism and requirements for quality to fit the importance of the information and what is being claimed. Require more credibility and evidence for stronger claims. You are right to be a little skeptical of dramatic information or information that conflicts with commonly accepted ideas. The new information may be true, but you should require a robust amount of evidence from highly credible sources.

File: File new information in your mind rather than immediately believing or disbelieving it. Avoid premature closure. Do not jump to a conclusion or come to a decision too quickly. It is fine simply to remember that someone claims XYZ to be the case. You need not worry about believing or disbelieving the claim right away. Wait until more information comes in, until you have time to really think about the issue, and until you gain more general knowledge.

Evaluate: Evaluate and re-evaluate regularly. New information or changing circumstances will affect the accuracy (and hence, your evaluation) of previous information. Recognize the dynamic, fluid nature of information. The saying, “Change is the only constant,” applies to much information, especially in technology, science, medicine and business.